

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
505 W. MULBERRY ST.
KOKOMO, INDIANA 46901**

**WEDDINGS AT FIRST
CONGREGATIONALCHURCH**

A wedding is one of the happiest and most significant events to take place in the Christian church. It is a moment that you as the bride and groom will remember and treasure all your days, and it's a time that is special for family members and friends as well. As the staff of First Congregational Church, we will work with you to make your wedding service a meaningful and memorable event in your life.

It is important to remember that a wedding is a Worship Service, and as such must be religiously significant and specifically Christian. The uniting of a man and woman in the bonds of marriage is meant to be a lasting bond and the marriage ceremony is the first step toward that kind of lasting relationship. We will work with you to make all aspects of the service pleasing and glorifying to God.

Sometimes, couples that are not affiliated with First Congregational Church come to us to arrange their wedding service. We welcome such opportunities. While membership is not a prerequisite for marriage in our church we do ask that couples consider membership as a means to further strengthen and encourage their marital vows and commitment.

PLANNING THE WEDDING

At your earliest possible convenience, please contact the pastor to determine the availability of dates and to set up the initial pre-marital conference. Marriages will not be arranged over the phone or through a third party (parents or friends).

The Pastor of First Congregational Church is to officiate at all weddings held in the church building. In some instances other clergy may participate. If the bride and groom wish to involve an outside clergy person in the ceremony, this should be made known to our Pastor as soon as possible that he may then extend a personal invitation to the guest minister. The wedding service remains under the supervision of the First Congregational Church Pastor and Wedding Coordinator.

The Pastor will arrange 2 pre-marital meetings with you for the purpose of

- 1). Becoming more acquainted with you personally.
- 2). Discussing your views and expectations of marriage
- 3). Sharing whatever counsel may be appropriate to your own circumstances.
- 4). Planning and reviewing the content of your particular service and examining the meaning of each aspect of the marriage ceremony.

During the pre-marital sessions the couple will be asked to complete a pre-marital questionnaire or inventory. The purpose of this is to assist the couple in their understanding of one another and their expectations of the marital relationship.

In some rare situations, the pre-marital time together may reveal that the couple is facing irreconcilable differences that would prevent a happy and successful marriage. If such differences cannot be worked out in counseling, the Pastor reserves the right to refuse or delay the performance of the wedding. Such an occurrence would be highly unusual.

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY/ORDER OF WORSHIP

One of the final steps in planning your wedding involves meeting with the Pastor. The focus will be on the designing of a meaningful and special service. The Pastor of First Congregational Church has a booklet that will help you create a unique marriage ceremony. All variations or innovations to your service must be discussed with the Pastor, who reserves the final say in such matters.

The Order of Worship for a typical Wedding Ceremony at First Congregational Church is as follows:

- Pre-Service Music (may include solos)
- Seating of Mothers (lighting of Mother's Candle)
- Processional (of wedding party)
- Statements About Marriage
- Presentation of the Bride
- Charge to the Couple
- The Word of God on Christian Love
- The Homily
- A Prayer for the Couple
- The Marriage Covenant
- The Vows of the Children (if appropriate)
- An Explanation of the Rings
- The Blessing of the Rings
- The Exchange of Rings
- The Promise of Those Gathered (optional)
- The Declaration of Marriage
- Special Ceremonies
- A Prayer for the Newlyweds
- The Benediction
- Presentation of the Couple

Note: the Wedding Ceremony is approximately 30 minutes.

REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal usually takes place the night or morning before the wedding. The wedding rehearsal will be approximately 1 hour in length.

Anyone participating in the wedding should be in attendance and on time for the rehearsal. This includes the bride, groom, best man, maid of honor, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, flower girl, ring bearer, bride's parents and groom's parents, soloist, and instrumentalist.

Decisions regarding the conduct of the wedding should all be settled before the time of the rehearsal so that the rehearsal may be a pleasant and relaxed affair. The Pastor has final authority in all matters relating to the wedding ceremony.

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

A wedding ceremony has legal significance as well as spiritual. When a Pastor performs a wedding, he or she acts on behalf of the state. The Pastor cannot perform any marriage ceremony without having the marriage license in hand. The information given the Pastor for the license must be valid and true.

Remember: The wedding license and marriage certificate should be brought to the church one week prior to the service and left with the secretary.

WEDDING MUSIC

The Director of Music/Church Organist will play at all weddings. If a schedule conflict arises, another competent organist may be asked only if cleared with the Director of Music/Church Organist and the Pastor notified. All music arrangements should be made directly with the Church Organist. **You are asked to have a meeting with the Church Organist regarding the selection of music for your wedding ceremony. His/Her number is at the end of this booklet.**

Weddings usually include a 10 to 20 minute program of music before the announced hour, a processional march and a recessional march. Vocal solos may also be included, especially in the pre-service music. The singing of one or two hymns by the congregation during the service can add meaning and beauty to the service and give your guests a chance to participate actively in your wedding ceremony.

The wedding is a worship service of the church and all music should be appropriate and in good taste. The Director of Music/Organist and Pastor, in dialogue with the couple, will work together in choosing music appropriate for the service. Music for the wedding ceremony should direct attention to God, and lift up the virtues of Christian love. The following principles should guide the couple in the selection of fitting music:

The music should be joyful! The wedding is a happy time, a time of thanking and praising God for the gifts of life and love, and a time for asking God's blessing on your new life together.

The music needs to be worship-oriented and God-centered, not entertainment-oriented. Lyrics associated with a particular musical piece are important whether that music be performed instrumentally or vocally. Texts from the Bible or hymnal are very appropriate.

There are excellent alternatives to the so-called traditional processional and recessional marches by Wagner and Mendelssohn. Please discuss these options with our Pastor and Director of Music/Organist at your earliest convenience.

If a couple desires a soloist, the soloist may be arranged by the couple themselves or through the Church. It is the responsibility of a soloist chosen by the couple to contact the Organist for a rehearsal. It is assumed that such a soloist is a competent vocalist and is familiar with the pieces of music to perform.

THE WEDDING COORDINATOR

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After meeting initially with the Pastor, the couple will need to meet as soon as possible with the Wedding Coordinator. The Wedding Coordinator has the responsibility to oversee all activities the day of the wedding with the exception of the worship service and music. It is her task to see that all goes smoothly and on time, thus permitting the bride, the bride's mother, and others to enjoy the day without worrying about the details.

In meeting with the Wedding Coordinator, please come prepared to discuss the following:

- Attendants for bride and groom
- Order and Method of Processing
- Receiving Line
- Flowers, Candles and other decorations
- Ushers, Registration Book Attendants, etc.
- Photography Schedule
- Seating Arrangements
- Any Unusual Requests or Needs

DECORATIONS

Candles -- The church provides the two usual altar candles. All other candles are the responsibility of the couple to purchase if desired. Seven-tiered floor candelabras are permitted in the chancel, but must have plastic protectors underneath them to protect the carpeting. Candelabras with safety brackets are available for placing at the end of the pews. Candles placed in windows must be in safe holders. **(For reasons of personal safety, the carrying of lighted candles is allowed only with a hurricane globe or lantern.)**

Unity Candle -- If desired, the oneness in marriage is celebrated during the marriage ceremony in the lighting of a unity candle. The couple should provide their own unity candle. Please bring it the night of the rehearsal.

Flowers -- Flowers should be ordered from a reliable florist, and should be delivered between 2 and 2 1/2 hours before photography. If the flowers are to be delivered earlier, the florist must call the church office during the week to determine a time when the church will be open.

Altar flowers after weddings, which are intended for use for worship Sunday, must be specified accordingly at the time you meet with the Wedding Coordinator. The Sunday will be reserved on the church's flower chart and mention will be made in the Sunday bulletin. In case the flower arrangement is inappropriate for Sunday use, the church reserves the right to rearrange the flowers for Sunday morning worship.

Bows and Pew Decorations - These should be tied to the pews. Thumbtacks and tape that would mar the finish are not allowed.

Church Furnishings and Decorations - Seasonal Church appointments (such as at Christmas and Easter), as well as chancel furniture, cannot be moved or removed for weddings.

USE OF THE CHURCH BUILDING

The Church Building is the House of the Lord and should be treated with all due respect.

In general, the Church Building is available 2 1/2 hours before the time of the service until 2 hours following the service. These hours may be extended if there are no conflicts with other weddings or church events.

We prefer bubbles, butterflies or bells be used rather than birdseed or rice. If birdseed is used it should not be handed out until guests are leaving the building and should not be brought back in to the building. Too often, it ends up in pews, hallways, restrooms, etc.

Air-conditioned dressing facilities with full-length mirrors are available for both the groomsmen and bridesmaids in the wedding party.

A nursery is available for infants and small children. Adult supervision is the responsibility of the couple, as well as help in picking up the nursery following its use.

Please note that there is no smoking permitted in the church building. No alcohol should be brought on church property.

6 The church custodian is responsible for cleaning the church.

7. No church properties are to be removed from the premises.

8. Should there be damage to the property the appropriate repair fees will be deducted from the "Damage Deposit," paid by non-members

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOGRAPHY

1. The photographer is to respect the marriage ceremony as a service of worship. Photography shall not delay, disturb or inconvenience the participants of the wedding ceremony. The photographer shall heed any instructions of the Pastor, Wedding Coordinator or Organist
2. Ushers are to inform guests with cameras that taking pictures are not permitted until after the Service.
3. Photographs may be taken before or after the service. Taking most or all photographs before the service reduces the waiting time for the guests at the reception. Please discuss any special photographic requests with the Wedding/Coordinator/Pastor.
4. No pictures other than a time exposure from the balcony or lobby may be taken during the ceremony.
5. The marriage ceremony may be videotaped discretely. Please discuss with the Pastor/Wedding Coordinator what spots are appropriate for recording the service
6. Tripod equipment should be set up in the church sanctuary balcony prior to the wedding ceremony and should not interfere with the church organist and/or soloists.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

It is the responsibility for the couple to share these guidelines with the photographer/videographer when making arrangements.

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Unity Candle -- If desired, the oneness in marriage is celebrated during the marriage ceremony in the lighting of a unity candle. The couple should provide their own unity candle. Please bring it the night of the rehearsal.

Flowers -- Flowers should be ordered from a reliable florist, and should be delivered between 2 1/2 and 2 hours before photography. If the flowers are to be delivered earlier, the florist must call the church office during the week to determine a time when the church will be open.

Altar flowers left from weddings, intended for use on the altar for Sunday's worship, must be specified accordingly at the time the wedding is planned with the Wedding Coordinator. The Sunday will be reserved on the church's flower chart and mention made in the Sunday bulletin. In case the flower arrangement is inappropriate for worship use, the church reserves the right to rearrange for altar use.

Bows and Pew Decorations - These should be tied to the pews. Thumbtacks and tape that would mar the finish are strictly prohibited.

Church Furnishings and Decorations - Seasonal Church appointments (such as at Christmas and Easter), as well as chancel furniture, cannot be moved or removed for weddings

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USE OF THE CHURCH BUILDING

The Church Building is the House of the Lord and should be treated with all due respect.

1. In general, the Church Building is available 2 1/2 hours before the time of the service until 2 hours after the starting time. These hours may be extended if there are no conflicts with other weddings or church events.

2. We prefer bubbles or bells be used rather than birdseed or rice. If birdseed is used it should not be handed out until guests are leaving the building and should not be brought back in. Too often, it ends up in pews, hallways, restrooms, etc.

3. Air-conditioned dressing facilities with full-length mirrors are available for both the groomsmen and bridesmaids in the wedding party.

4. A nursery is available for infants and small children. Adult supervision is the responsibility of the couple, as well as help in picking up the nursery following its use.

5. There is no smoking in the church sanctuary, chapel or narthex. No alcohol should be brought on church property.

6. The church custodian is responsible for cleaning the church.

7. No church properties are to be removed from the premises.

2. Ushers are to inform guests with cameras that taking pictures is not permitted.

3. Photographs may be taken before or after the service. Taking most or all photographs before the service reduces the waiting time for the guests at the reception. Please discuss any special requests with the Wedding Coordinator/Pastor.

4. No pictures other than a time exposure from the balcony or lobby may be taken during the ceremony.

10. The marriage ceremony may be videotaped discretely. Please discuss with the Pastor/Wedding Coordinator what spots are appropriate for recording the service

6. Photographers are forbidden to be in the close vicinity of the organist. Tripod equipment should be set up in the church sanctuary balcony prior to the wedding ceremony and should not interfere with the church organist and/or soloists.

It is the responsibility for the couple to share these guidelines with the photographer/videographer when making arrangements

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WEDDING RECEPTIONS FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

The church facilities are available for wedding receptions for all church members and their families. The church does not cater receptions; therefore, the family is responsible for all catering and cleanup. Members who wish to use the church's dishes, linens, and serving pieces are asked to contact the Women's Guild. It is requested that all lines used be professionally dry cleaned after the reception. The church custodian must be employed to set up tables and chairs and to be present during the reception. No alcoholic beverages can be brought onto church property.

FEES

We are not in the "wedding business". That is, it is our conviction that the church must not make a 'business' of performing for the state. We conduct weddings as servants of Christ and of His Church. However, the church and church staff expend much time and expense in performing weddings for non-members. Many lights are used, heating or air conditioning must be on, the sanctuary must be cleaned and set up prior to the wedding and then cleaned and set up in time for the Sunday worship. The staff spends evening and weekend hours away from their families working with the couple and performing the wedding ceremony. In light of these considerations, the Council of First Congregational UCC has established several fees with respect to non-member weddings. The Pastor will share the current fees with you.

Please turn in all fees to the church office one week prior to the wedding. This is one less thing to have to remember on the day of the wedding ceremony.

REMINDERS TO PARTICIPANTS

In consideration to the guests and the participants, it is important that the wedding begins on time. Therefore, all persons should arrive in ample time to dress and have any pre-service photographs completed well in advance of the time for the wedding. The Wedding Coordinator will pass out the time schedules at the rehearsal. Following the service consider carefully how long the photographs and receiving line will take. Be considerate of guests who may have long waits during the receiving line and photographs. Also limousines that have been hired to drive the couple to the reception are on tight schedules and appreciate your promptness.

Some Suggested Reading:

<u>I Pledge You My Troth</u>	-James Olthuis
<u>I Married You</u>	-Walter Trobisch
<u>To Understand Each Other</u>	-Paul Tournier
<u>Caring Enough to Confront</u>	-David Augsburg
<u>Intended for Pleasure -</u>	Ed and Gaye Wheat
<u>As For Me and My House</u>	-Walter Wangerin, Jr.

A List of Contacts

If you have any further questions, we have provided you with a list of contact people below:

Pastor Scott Keehn (Church) 452-8285 (Home) 868-9796
 Wedding Coordinator, Sherry King (Home) 453-6719
 Dir. Music/Organist, Cathy Hoppes (Church 452-8285)
 (Home) 453-4714
 Secretary, Diane Knight (Home) 883-7191
 Custodian – Linda Trent (Home) 452-2360

THANK YOU.

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